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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE THIRD DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Report of the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. This report was prepared pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/8 of 11 April 1996.

2. Chapter I includes information on the activities undertaken by the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system; chapter II contains information received from Governments; chapter III provides information received from intergovernmental organizations; chapter IV deals with the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and chapter V indicates the activities which the High Commissioner for Human Rights intends to undertake in 1997, in conformity with the plan of activities to be carried out during the first third of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1994-1997). 1/

I. ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. General Assembly

3. At its fifty-first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/81, by which it once again expressed its deep concern about the fact that the phenomenon of racism and racial discrimination against migrant workers continues to increase despite efforts undertaken by the international community to improve the protection of the human rights of migrant workers and members of their families; it also recommended that a seminar should be organized by the Centre for Human Rights in cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Telecommunication Union and other relevant United Nations bodies, NGOs and Internet service providers, with a view to assessing the role of the Internet and to suggesting ways and means for its responsible use in the light of the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

4. The General Assembly further regretted the lack of interest, support and financial resources for the Third Decade and its related Programme of Action, as reflected in the fact that the Centre for Human Rights had been able to organize only one seminar since its adoption by the General Assembly in 1993, and noted that unless a supplementary financial effort was made very few of the activities planned for the period 1994-1997 would be carried out.

B. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

5. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) transmitted the following information:

> "The elimination of racism and racial discrimination is relevant to all aspects of the work of UNHCR, whether for the prevention of refugee flows, the protection of refugees and their reception in countries of asylum, or the promotion of voluntary repatriation as a durable solution. The Office of the High Commissioner has taken a number of initiatives in response to such concerns. It is publishing this year a training module for its staff entitled 'Human rights and

refugee protection', in which a specific chapter addresses racial discrimination. The issues under discussion include discrimination between different groups of refugees, discrimination between refugees and citizens of the country of asylum, and protection against xenophobia and racist violence. A pilot project is being devised for human rights education, targeting primary school teachers, and thereby young children, which hopefully we will soon be in a position to share with the Centre for Human Rights. Our Public Information Section has undertaken various initiatives in order to raise public awareness to the plight of refugees, confront stereotypes and strive to promote tolerance and understanding. A multimedia campaign which was run in 1994 and 1995 in over a dozen countries in Europe, North and Latin America is now being extended to Africa and the Middle East. The campaign's goal is to raise public sensitivity to the plight of refugees and promote advocacy against all forms of racism, xenophobia and mistreatment of asylum-seekers. The main methods of campaigning have been through posters, magazine advertisements and video public service announcements and clips. Children are one of the groups targeted for public awareness activities. UNHCR has developed educational materials appropriate for children such as the 'Refugee children brochure', 'Enfants de l'exil', and videos such as 'Make a little difference' for 8 to 13-year-old children as well as the 'Hate and destruction' video clip for adolescents. UNHCR has also prepared supplementary teaching guides. A video is now being produced for younger children (5 to 8 years old), together with a teaching guide, and will be translated into French, German and Spanish. The 'Spot the refugee', 'How does it feel?' and 'What's wrong here?' posters have also been utilized as educational tools and distributed in large quantities to schools in many countries. UNHCR is also intensifying its cooperation with the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The Office contributed, for instance, to the drafting of the General Recommendation of 19 August 1996 concerning the rights of refugees and persons displaced on the basis of ethnic criteria (CERD/C/Misc.3/Rev.5). UNHCR will endeavour to comment on selected country reports in the future."

6. UNHCR also provided the information that it has created a CD-ROM which contains legal documents and other sources of information about refugees, forced displacement and human rights, current country reports from a range of reputable sources, a bibliographic database containing more than 12,000 references to refugees and human rights literature and other essential reference materials.

C. Department of Public Information

7. The following is an abstract from a report provided by the Department of Public Information (DPI).

8. The Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination is additionally important because it is being held in conjunction with the International Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) and the

International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004). It provides a unique opportunity to emphasize the message of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

9. In its responsibility to advocate and promote the work of the United Nations in the field of human rights, DPI is emphasizing this linkage in its information programmes and activities. This multimedia approach consists of: production of print promotional material, radio and television programmes, films, photos and exhibits; providing press coverage of intergovernmental meetings on human rights issues; holding press conferences and briefings, liaising with the media; organizing special events and other activities; and collaborating with non-governmental organizations.

10. The promotional materials produced by DPI are mainly aimed at the new media, but much is widely used by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government officials, policy makers, officials of the United Nations system, students and educators. Information is also redisseminated to the general public through NGOs, including educational and cultural institutions, religious organizations and others.

11. To highlight the activities of the Organization, the Department launches information programmes on specific themes. Radio and television programmes are produced regularly in a variety of languages and are broadcast by national radio and television stations around the world. For instance, since the beginning of the Third Decade, United Nations Radio has produced more than 50 programmes and featurettes on racial discrimination in the six official languages of the United Nations, as well as in non-official languages such as Bangla, Dutch, Hindi, Indonesian, Kiswahili, Portuguese, Turkish and Urdu. Radio documentaries will be produced throughout the Decade, as part of the regular 15-minute weekly radio series that the Department produces in 15 languages.

12. Several "UN in Action" television programmes produced by the Department in English for CNN World Report (and in additional languages for wider distribution) have featured issues related to human rights. The CNN programmes are broadcast in more than 120 countries. Public service announcements for radio, television and print are also used by the Department to disseminate information about the work of the United Nations. The Department also organizes press conferences and briefings, seminars, round tables and other activities to inform the media about the Organization's work.

13. The DPI network of 68 United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) and Services (UNISs) and 8 United Nations Offices (UNOs) have been instrumental in promoting the objectives of the Third International Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. The centres and services are very active in disseminating from Headquarters and producing relevant materials. They also organize or co-sponsor events, meetings, public gatherings and briefings; participate in seminars, workshops, panels and lectures; and give interviews to the media.

14. The following section highlights some of the main activities undertaken by selected centres and services around the world on the occasion of the 1996 International Day for the Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination.

15. UNIC Athens attended the official opening of the European Week against Racism and Intolerance. Among key participants were the Minister of Education, local authorities and journalists. An exhibition of Greek NGOs operating in the field of human rights was set up.

16. UNIC Brazzaville coordinated a panel discussion on racial discrimination. Among the key participants was the Minister of Communication and Culture. Before the panel discussion took place, participants attended the screening of "Qu'il est long le chemin" and "Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

17. UNIC Lisbon arranged for two national daily newspapers Diário de Notícias and Público to join a European newspapers initiative against racism and the SOS Racism campaign. The two newspapers made racial discrimination their main theme for the Day. The UNIC Director gave three interviews on different radio stations. The Day had been especially selected for the official launching of the Portuguese version of the "Passport for the future" which was distributed to students and teachers. UNIC Lisbon also arranged for copies of the passport to be distributed in five Portuguese-speaking African countries.

18. UNIC Geneva organized, in cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights, an art exhibition devoted to human rights and racial discrimination, which was officially opened by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, and a round table discussion on the theme "Racism at the eve of the XXIst Century". Panellists included members of the NGO Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization, the Chairman of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a Professor of Sociology from the University of Geneva and a representative of the World Council of Churches.

19. UNIC Rome jointly sponsored with the NGO "Arci Nero e Non Solo" and with the European Union a series of initiatives all over Italy. One initiative consisted of simultaneously projecting in 50 cities, free of charge, films devoted to the issue of racial discrimination such as "Schindler's list" and "The colour purple". Various Italian radio and television networks announced the celebration of the Day during their news programmes. A special RAI educational talk-show targeted to young people devoted a special show to the Day, with the participation of the Ambassador of South Africa and representatives of "Arci Nero e Non Solo". UNIC Rome gave an interview to the private station Radio Popular of Milan, which broadcast a special programme for the Day.

20. Throughout the Decade, the Department will encourage the UNICs and UNISs to work more closely with national organizations at all levels in order to emphasize and widely disseminate various human rights instruments. When contacting national organizations, they will stress the importance of educating and informing people at all levels and in all strata of society. Working closely with grass-roots organizations, UNICs and UNISs are undertaking special promotional activities to heighten public awareness of the issues of racism and racial discrimination. Such activities include the organization of press conferences and briefings, or round tables and seminars. UNICs will also encourage exchanges between schools from different

neighbourhoods, where children from disadvantaged minorities and different countries can learn about other cultures or differences. They also encourage schools to include human rights in their curricula. As in past celebrations of the International Day for the Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination, special cultural events could be organized featuring art, music and theatre performances. Famous people such as actors, singers or athletes who are role models for youngsters are being mobilized to speak on human rights issues.

21. Collaboration between the United Nations system and national and regional organizations is essential for a successful educational campaign in which the general public can learn about their rights and the mechanisms which exist to enforce those rights, and the importance of peace and conflict resolution. To accomplish this, human rights instruments and other human rights materials available in print and audio-visual formats should be widely disseminated. As part of this campaign, the DPI has helped to arrange the translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has been translated and disseminated in more than 150 languages. It has also recently produced a poster/brochure (DPI/1653) on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in English, French and Spanish, which has been distributed globally. A wall chart (DPI/1549) on the United Nations human rights mechanisms and a brochure on the United Nations and human rights (DPI/1774) have also been produced and distributed worldwide.

22. During the Decade the Department will endeavour to reprint and widely disseminate the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (DPI/858). The Department will also produce backgrounders and features in order to raise public awareness of and sensitize public opinion on the issue. For instance, a backgrounder is being prepared on racism, and its consequences, highlighting the work of the United Nations in this field.

23. Throughout the Decade, DPI will continue to provide press, radio and television coverage of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies and to give special attention to issues concerning racism in its ongoing and special promotional activities.

24. The proclamation of the three United Nations decades on human rights issues provides a unique opportunity for the international community to spread the human rights message worldwide in close cooperation with various sectors and actors of society.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

A. Croatia

[Original: English]
[2 August 1996]

25. In its work on combat against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance in its contemporary form the Government of the Republic of

Croatia has undertaken various measures of both a legislative and practical nature in order to eradicate those and similar practices whose threat to the life of society in general remains highly visible.

26. In this view, the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia prescribes the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth and other status (art. 14). The same article stipulates equality before the law. Article 15 contains a special non-discrimination clause relating to the minorities in the Republic of Croatia. The said constitutional provisions are further elaborated in the Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and Rights of Ethnic and National Communities or Minorities, which contains similar non-discrimination clauses in its articles 1 (m) and 6 (a).

27. Furthermore, the prevention of discriminatory practices, racism and intolerance and its possible reflection in the everyday life of society finds its expression in the penal legislation of the Republic of Croatia. In this respect, the Criminal Act of the Republic of Croatia contains several articles relating to discriminatory practices which represent a solid basis for the combat against such behaviour. Article 45 of the said act prohibits the infringement of the equality of citizens on the basis of nationality, race, religion, colour, ethnicity or other basis. No single case of such a crime was recorded in the course of 1995. In the same spirit, article 240 of the Criminal Act stipulates the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred and intolerance. In the course of 1995, nine cases of such behaviour were recorded and its perpetrators brought before the courts.

28. The Republic of Croatia is a party to a number of international human rights instruments whose relevance in the field of the eradication of and the combat against racism and racial discrimination remains of particular significance, most notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the UNESCO Convention on Discrimination in Education.

29. Inspired by the provisions of the international instruments mentioned the Basic Criminal Act of the Republic of Croatia in its article 133 stipulates the crime of racial and other discrimination as defined by general international law. However, no cases regarding such crime have been recorded in the course of 1995.

30. The Government of the Republic of Croatia is fully aware that legislative and judicial measures, though of necessity and importance in a democratic society, are only a part of the means available in order to combat discriminatory practices, racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

31. In this respect, a lot can be done through the educational system creating the curricula that will promote tolerance, respect for human rights, peace and non-violence from preschool to university level. Therefore, in June 1996, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has established the National Committee on Human Rights Education, the government body with the task of coordinating the work on the inclusion of human rights teaching standards in the school curricula.

32. As a result of democratization process rapidly occurring in the country, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has undertaken important measures in order to reform and modernize the school curricula. At present, human rights education, tolerance and promotion of peace are taught as cross-curricular topics which are presented in various subjects in primary and secondary schools e.g., nature and society, history, geography, ethics, politics and economy, psychology, sociology, etc.

33. Moreover, the Regulation on the Advancement of Teachers and Professors in Primary and Secondary Schools (Official Gazette No. 89/95) includes provisions on the teachers' professional advancement and promotion in dependence on their respect for human rights. Article 5 of the said Regulation expressly demands "promotion of human rights and care for healthy environment". Furthermore, the full acceptance of the provisions of the Declaration and Convention on the Rights of the Child is required by the teachers and professors in order to enable the application of its principles in work by "equally accepting children to the exclusion of any prejudices with respect to descent, gender or race".

34. According to the provisions of the Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and Rights of National or Ethnic Communities and Minorities (arts. 14-17) minorities have the right to establish their own schools and to develop their own school curricula. However, they are as well entitled to the education in their own language and script. Such preferential measures contribute to the better understanding of culture, language and tradition of minorities and to establishing the atmosphere of tolerance.

B. Denmark

[Original: English]
[2 August 1996]

35. In May 1995, the Ministry of Labour formulated a memorandum to the Danish Parliament regarding the efforts made to combat discrimination on the labour market. The memorandum consists partly of recommendations of new initiatives submitted by a interministerial task force, partly of a brief presentation of the work of the Appointment Committee.

36. On 5 October 1995, at the meeting of the European Union Council of Ministers, a resolution concerning racism and xenophobia was adopted. In this resolution, the member States are urged to safeguard against any form of discrimination because of race, colour, religion, nationality or ethnic background, especially on the labour market.

37. In the spring of 1996, the Danish Parliament passed a bill on the banning of discrimination on the labour market, etc. The statute came into force on 1 July 1996; its main purpose is the implementation on the labour market of ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

38. Furthermore, a number of initiatives aimed at improving the opportunities for ethnic minorities to be integrated in the Danish labour market have been put forward in the Barrier Action Plan of 1994 (breaking down of occupation barriers for immigrants and refugees), pertaining to the reduction of the extraordinarily high level of unemployment among immigrants and refugees and to place them on an equal footing with the Danes on the labour market.

39. In relation to the Barrier Action Plan, funds are also earmarked to promote mutual cultural understanding, as well as unconventional training and occupation projects. The purpose is to influence the mental barriers that may be the reason why immigrants and refugees experience more unemployment than the Danes.

40. Finally, funds are earmarked to appoint people with special knowledge of the employment problems of immigrants to the Danish job placement service.

C. Monaco

[Original: French]
[4 September 1996]

41. The Government of Monaco has for very many years been committed to developing a policy for the reception and integration of non-French-speaking families.

42. Since 1977, in the light of the considerable increase in the number of children having to begin a form of education completely different from that of their country of origin and unrelated to their native language, and in the middle of the school year, special primary classes have been set up to smooth their transition and a specific teaching method developed to help them learn French quickly.

43. The number of foreign students is much larger in primary school, and the duration of their schooling relatively limited, as the number going on to secondary school drops sharply.

44. This experience demonstrates that the most willing students can be fully integrated into their new school system within two years.

45. Encouraged by these results, at the start of the 1985-1986 school year the Directorate of National Education, Youth and Sports undertook to develop similar classes at the secondary-school level for non-French-speaking children aged 12-15.

46. One teacher has even been recruited for the sole purpose of looking after the young foreign children attending schools that do not yet have adequate arrangements.

47. According to surveys undertaken in the schools, the three most common nationalities are Italian, Portuguese and Moroccan.

48. These statistics make a distinction between students of foreign nationality who were none the less born in Monaco and immigrants from countries whose socio-economic and cultural background represents an obstacle to academic success unless they receive very close and regular supervision.

49. The Directorate of National Education, Youth and Sports of the Principality of Monaco has specialized staff in the social fields.

50. In order to minimize the problems of adjustment and make it easier to cope with any possible discrimination, this staff works directly in the schools.

51. The staff, along with the school principals, pays particular attention to these children so as to detect as early as possible any family, school or social problems that might hinder their full intellectual and personal development.

52. The struggle against racism and racial discrimination in Monaco is not the same as what many other countries are experiencing, simply because of the size, population and above all the closer family relations that exist in the Principality.

53. This lack of serious racial problems must, however, always be accompanied by keeping the teaching methods and the reception and employment structures under constant review, so as to constantly facilitate the adjustment of non-French-speaking children at all levels.

III. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. Council of Europe/European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

54. The following information was received from the Council of Europe and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance:

55. More than 100 representatives of the national committees of the "All Different, All Equal" campaign and of anti-racist organizations, pilot project organizers, journalists and education specialists met in Budapest, Hungary, on 4 February 1994. Their mission was to assess the campaign and come up with practical proposals on future initiatives to combat racism and intolerance at the European, national and local levels.

56. A preliminary estimate presented at this meeting was that more than 2,000 activities had been organized as part of the campaign in more than 34 participating countries. Again as a preliminary estimate, more than 100 international NGOS had joined the movement, 94 pilot projects had received direct support from the Council of Europe in 26 countries, 20 million French francs had been allocated to local projects and the campaign's total expenditures had exceeded 100 million francs.

57. The campaign programme continued with the "European Week of Action against Racism", which was observed throughout Europe (16-24 March 1996), and with the 2nd Media Action Day against Racism and Intolerance (21 March 1996).

58. The European sports world encouraged athletes, sports clubs and sponsors to take part in a demonstration for tolerance, which was held in Amsterdam on 11 April. National action programmes are under way in several countries, involving large public demonstrations.

59. While the European campaign programme is approaching its end, everyone hopes that the Council of Europe will find the means for the campaign to maintain its momentum by continuing its activities in each area of interest, particularly that of youth, by making available to the public an information network on activities to promote tolerance and related issues and by finding the funds to support local projects throughout the continent.

60. The European Union has proposed proclaiming 1997 the "European Year against Racism".

61. Participants in the Budapest meeting agreed that the "European Year against Racism" should capitalize fully on the success of the "All Different, All Equal" campaign and that the initiative should not end at the borders of the 15 member States of the European Union.

62. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, which has been in existence since 22 March 1994, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, agreed at its latest plenary session of 4-7 June 1996 actively to develop its relations with NGOS. One of the decisions taken was to produce a fact-sheet on the Commission's activities on a regular basis and send it to NGOS involved in combatting racism and intolerance.

63. Governmental organizations can take their issues directly before the European Commission against Racism, in accordance with its mandate. If necessary, it can organize hearings with the interested parties.

64. The Commission has also prepared a document on the dissemination of racial hatred through electronic communications media, particularly the Internet, and has sent the document to the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on the Mass Media; it has drafted a text on judicial cooperation on the problem of criminal prosecution of racist or xenophobic offences, which it sent to the European Committee on Crime Problems; and it has established one working group to develop its relations with NGOS and another to deal with the question of national bodies with special responsibility for the struggle against racism and intolerance.

B. International Organization for Migration

65. The International Organization for Migration reported that from 9 to 11 February 1996, it had convened, in Ferney-Voltaire (France), a round table on "Effective respect for the rights and dignity of migrants: New needs and responses".

66. The Round Table expressed the concern of a wide range of international actors for the respect and protection of migrants' rights and their fundamental human dignity. Participants included some 40 representatives of Governments, international organizations, migrant groups and non-governmental organizations from all regions of the world.

67. A review of practical experience from the various regions of the world indicated that in many situations migrants' rights were far from adequately respected, if recognized at all. Participants noted an alarming increase in the trafficking of migrants, especially of women; and exploitation of migrant women working in domestic service with no legal protection. Consensus emerged that, while fully respecting the rights of States to control entry into their territory, it was in the interest of all parties to ensure that migration took place under conditions that ensured respect for the rights of migrants. Despite the improvements in a number of countries, participants noted that restrictive tendencies and anti-migrant attitudes were gaining currency. In this context, participants recalled that international migration had historically had a positive impact for both sending and receiving countries and still had many positive consequences for the countries involved. 2/

IV. ACTIVITIES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

68. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has submitted a joint statement on the prevention of racial discrimination and xenophobia and the promotion of equal treatment in the workplace, adopted at the Social Dialogue Summit, held in Florence on 21 October 1995, by the European federations of private- and public-sector employers and the European Trade Union Confederation. The preamble to this text reads as follows (the rest is available for consultation with the secretariat):

> "The social partners reaffirm the very great importance they attach to the achievement in Europe of a democratic, pluralistic society characterized by solidarity and respect for the dignity of all human beings. Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and promotion of equal opportunity are fundamental values of the common cultural heritage and legal traditions of all European States.
>
> The European Union and its member States are unanimous in their condemnation of racism and xenophobia, and have undertaken on many occasions to eliminate them. However, continuous efforts will be necessary to overcome discrimination. Legal protection is not itself sufficient to eliminate racist and xenophobic behaviour and feelings.
>
> Racism and xenophobia constitute a serious threat, not only to the stability of European society, but also to the smooth functioning of the economy. This is a problem which is not limited to the workplace but which affects society as a whole and is in everyone's interest, and the responsibility of all to remedy.
>
> The fight against racism and xenophobia is, amongst other things, closely linked to the improvement of the general employment situation, to migration and integration policies, in particular as regards access to education and accommodation, as well as to the combat against illegal employment. Public authorities have substantial responsibility in this context, but the social partners also have an important role to play.

A series of experiences in which the mutual commitment of the social partners have achieved measures leading to the prevention of racism and xenophobia, have been in operation for some time, thereby progressing towards successful integration.

The social partners recognize both the complexity of the problem and the extent of its implications. In adopting this declaration, they reaffirm openly, clearly and publicly their commitment to taking an active part in a common endeavour to prevent racial discrimination and to acting jointly against it in their own sphere of influence, the workplace.

Work is indeed an essential factor for both the subsistence and social integration of people. In addition, harmonious work relationships and making the best possible use of all aptitudes and skills are crucial elements for business efficiency. Moreover, establishing and developing harmonious relations within organizations may prove to be a model for society as a whole and may play a central role in combating racism and xenophobia.

Equal rights and the equal application of laws and agreements to all workers are the fundamental principles of any policy to combat racism and xenophobia in the workplace.

The prevention of racial discrimination in the workplace also requires an in-depth knowledge of the voluntary or involuntary forms which direct and indirect discrimination may take, and thereafter the identification and dissemination of good practices with the aim of preventing and combating such discrimination.

Racial discrimination and inequality of opportunity and treatment occur in different circumstances in the professional life of members of racial, ethnic, or religious groups, of migrants, or of their children e.g. in recruitment, selection, access to training, work allocation, promotion, dismissal, etc.

The dissemination of information, the availability of guidance and the implementation of specific actions, involving all players actively and in concert (i.e. employers, workers, trade unions, employers' organizations and employment services), are prerequisites of the promotion of equal treatment and the fight against racial discrimination.

Devising and disseminating such policies with detailed practical examples providing guidance to all those concerned, in the form of declarations, guides, codes of good practice, etc., can make a positive contribution towards raising public awareness of different types of overt or covert discrimination, and thereby to their effective prevention.

This joint declaration is based on the experiences of organizations throughout the European Union which have been successful in the search for solutions to the problem. It explains the motives

behind this action and proposes measures which can be taken by organizations to prevent discrimination based on race, religion, ethnic or national origin, or colour.

The social partners will reflect on the best means on putting into practice the proposals in this declaration in accordance with their own particular circumstances, bearing in mind that these initiatives should neither increase the stigmatization of ethnic minorities and migrants nor jeopardize their integration.

They may wish to share with others their experience and the lessons they have learnt, with a view to devising new models of good practice."

B. Conference of European Churches

69. The Conference of European Churches says it is important to broaden the debate on racism and racial discrimination beyond respect for others - that is, beyond the issue of human rights. In order to make the mechanisms of racism better understood by each of us, it is essential to shed light on history - the history of colonization, of the Inquisition, and of the subordination of one group of human beings to another. What are these mechanisms that keep feelings alive in the depths of our souls, only to rise to the surface and erupt in acts of racial or other forms of discrimination? What can be done better to understand this cultural heritage of the "white man's" scorn for coloured people, and how can we control this behaviour? The exploitation of these feelings for political purposes should also be exposed.

70. The Conference welcomes the fact that the United Nations approaches racism by examining incidents characteristic of contemporary forms of racism, incidents which unfortunately seem to be on the rise throughout the world, aggravated by economic and social problems and the current universal decline in moral standards. It is also praiseworthy to wish to combat these phenomena through human rights education aimed at preventing the behaviour breeding racism and other related forms of discrimination and intolerance. To reflect upon the past, however, and to expose current exploitation of people's feelings, can but contribute to a better understanding of these phenomena and make it easier to attack them at the root.

71. The Conference also indicates that it has created a working group on racism and xenophobia, whose mandate is to encourage and facilitate the initiatives of Church leaders to combat racism.

C. International Fellowship of Reconciliation

72. The International Fellowship of Reconciliation reported that the Racial and Economic Justice Section of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States of America had designed a project entitled "Women of color in the workplace", begun in 1993. Through this project, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation is working with women of colour who were facing

low-paid and dangerous working conditions to build a stronger movement for equity in the workplace. Regional conferences are bringing together domestic labourers, poultry plant workers, women working in illegal sweatshops and labour activists to develop dignity, pride and new organizing strategies to end workplace exploitation.

73. To date, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation has held three national and regional conferences - in Greensboro, North Carolina in May 1994, in Louisville, Kentucky in October 1995, and in New York City in June 1996. At each conference, speakers and workshops addressed workplace concerns of women of colour. Topics included: unity among women workers, immigrant rights, health and safety issues, and strategies to defeat racial and sexual harassment. Each conference provided a space where women could express and explore the oppression they were experiencing. Participants included women workers from many sectors, unemployed women, and leaders of numerous women's organizations and social justice groups.

74. A specific focus that has emerged out of these conferences is an action programme to support poultry plant workers. Recently, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation had conducted a project to gather more information about the conditions for women working in poultry plants in the south of the United States.

D. Human Rights League (Belgian section of the International Federation of Human Rights)

75. The Human Rights League proposes that visas should be eliminated for all persons residing in, or wishing to travel to, the European Union on the grounds of the discriminatory practices linked with the granting of visas.

76. The League believes that this proposal reconciles the protection of human rights, the rule of law, democracy and national sovereignty. Besides the fact that visas are not an effective means of controlling migration, the requirement that a person must hold a visa in order to enter a country is a disproportionate violation of the right to freedom of movement.

77. In the short term, the elimination of short-stay visas has a number of advantages:

(a) It facilitates freedom of movement of tourists, business people, members of a family settled in another country and the like. Both the national returning home on holiday and the foreigner visiting his family can do so without hindrance;

(b) It lightens the administrative work (Department of Foreigners, municipalities, consulates and so forth) and eliminates arbitrary risks as well as the cumbersome, protracted and even humiliating nature of the procedures for obtaining a visa;

(c) It eliminates the requirement for the transportation provider to check visas and turn away travellers;

(d) It does away with one obstacle to the flight of refugees and limits their exploitation by people smugglers and providers of forged documents;

(e) It eliminates the submission of asylum applications based solely on the lack of a visa.

In the long term, the elimination of visas enables the following:

(a) The opening of a genuine debate on migratory issues, in which the control of migration is clearly distinguished from the right to asylum;

(b) The elimination of xenophobic treatment or of the criminalization of the traveller and the foreigner.

The complete elimination of short-stay visas is nothing but the logical conclusion to an ongoing process of change:

(a) Exit visas, which existed in the past, have been abolished. Every person is free to leave any country, according to the texts on the protection of human rights (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 12, para. 2; Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Fourth Protocol, art. 2). Consequently, given that the world is divided into countries, it is normal for every person to be free to enter another country.

(b) Travel visas are being abolished in increasingly large areas. The development of the European Union is the most striking example: movement is becoming free within it. Entry visas to the European Union are also being eliminated in many eastern and central European as well as Latin American countries. Visa policy is now a part of European law (Treaty of Maastricht, art. 100C).

E. Asian Women's Human Rights Council

78. The Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC) would like to draw the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the Dalit movement now spreading in India. Dalit, a name used for the low-castes, the ex-Untouchables of India, has now come to mean a vibrant movement for equality, emancipation and dignity among the Dalits themselves. From this movement among India's depressed classes have sprung new forms of culture and struggle in India, Dalit literature, Dalit theatre and Dalit art. Despite the emerging consciousness of the Dalits, however, discrimination and violence against them continue unabated, in the name of racism.

79. Another growing concern of AWHRC is the racial discrimination being experienced and reported by Filipino migrant workers, particularly the women who fall victim to the mail-order bride system and trafficking in women. AWHRC is particularly concerned with the cases being reported from Japan by numerous Filipina brides and other women migrants who face racial violence in their daily lives.

F. World Federation of United Nations Associations

80. The World Federation of United Nations Associations reported that it has launched "a programme related to the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the aim to (a) ensure the ratification by Governments, which have not yet done so, of the international human rights instruments, (b) promoting the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and (c) to persuade Governments to accept the individual communications procedures referred to in article 14 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and in article 22 of the Convention against Torture.

81. In addition, the World Federation of United Nations Associations will be including human rights issues in the agenda of every relevant international meeting of the Federation and of every relevant national meeting of its affiliates. Further the World Federation intends to cooperate with the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

V. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 1997

82. The availability of financial and human resources permitting, the High Commissioner for Human Rights will attempt to pursue the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

83. Two seminars and a training course on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination are among the activities planned. One seminar will deal with immigration and racism, and the other with the right to equality before the courts and other judicial institutions, including the right to compensation for injuries suffered as a result of discrimination.

84. Another seminar, the convening of which had been requested by the General Assembly and which would be on the subject "The Internet and the struggle against racism and racial discrimination", could also be held if it received the support of the Commission on Human Rights.

85. In addition, the Centre for Human Rights will undertake three studies on the following topics, incorporated in the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination or in subsequent resolutions:

(a) Study of the effects of racial discrimination on the children of members of minorities and of migrant workers;

(b) Study of the implementation of article 2 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and

(c) Study of the economic factors contributing to the perpetuation of racism and racial discrimination.

VI. CONCLUSION

86. As stressed by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination did not command sufficient interest to lead to far-reaching activities. Financial and human resources are lacking.

87. For the time being, the main initiatives are being taken by European bodies, through campaigns for youth, mobilization meetings and the creation of bodies responsible for combating racism and racial discrimination or xenophobia.

88. The present session of the Commission should lead to a stronger commitment to combating racism and racial discrimination, in conformity with the commitment taken in 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna.

Notes

1/ See the report of the Secretary-General, E/1994/97, paras. 66-69.

2/ For more details, see International Organization for Migration, "Report of the Round Table on Effective Respect for the Rights and Dignity of Migrants: New Needs and Responses", Geneva 1996.